



New Classification of AVA Events -AVA Community Events

The National Executive Council of the AVA met this past August in Boerne (Bernie!), Texas for a jam-packed weekend of training, planning, and a brief board meeting whereby the National Executive Council approved of a new brand of AVA Community Events (ACE) designed to allow clubs flexibility in the creation of events that will support growth and enhancement of our current IVV sanctioned events.

According to AVA President, David Bonewitz, “businesses must change and adapt to changing conditions around them. To fail to do so will surely lead to slow decline and eventual death. Two classic examples of thriving businesses that failed to adapt to the changes around them are Kodak (who did not change with the growth of digital photography) and Blockbuster (who failed to see the change in technology). These are but two classic examples of businesses who failed to adapt and are no longer around. We do not want AVA: America's Walking Club to suffer this same fate. So, the goal of the national leadership is to find ways that AVA can adapt in order to not only survive, but to thrive.” The development of non-IVV events called AVA Community Events is one of these changes.

The mission of the AVA is *to promote and organize noncompetitive physical fitness activities that encourage lifelong fun, fitness and friendship for all ages and abilities.* Nowhere does our mission state we should “stamp IVV books.” The IVV programs have been the means by which AVA accomplishes its mission. The AVA President further states that while this has been very successful for 40 years, the world has changed and we have not. “Don't misunderstand this point. Adding new non-IVV programs does not mean that we cease our IVV programs. It just broadens our ability to accomplish our mission.”

In order to be able to “legally” establish the non-IVV/AVA Community Events we may need to change our Articles of Incorporation and our ByLaws and that may very well be what it will take to change and adapt if we want to survive.

The non-IVV/AVA Community Events fall into the following three classifications:

AVA Youth Community Events – This type of event will cater to clubs who will be working with youth in the elementary, middle and high school environment. Accessibility will be limited to protect the identity and well-being of minors who will be participating.

AVA Traditional Community Events – This type of event is comparable to the traditional event clubs currently host with the exception that this type of event does not have to be designed according to IVV guidelines. Hopefully this will allow clubs more flexibility to customize community events in their regions where an IVV event is not possible due to constraints of IVV guidelines thus drawing more participation.

AVA Guided Community Events – These events are designed to encourage weekly participation on a *regular* basis. Fun walks, guided walks, meet ups, etc., are examples of events that could fall into this category. Individual maps will not be required so long as there is a guide on each walk and all participants follow the guide.

Although non-IVV/AVA Community Events are not required to follow IVV guidelines, the AVA will be outlining club and insurance criteria for these types of events prior to inception. Also, because these events are not required to adhere to IVV guidelines, participants cannot receive IVV credit for attending any of these events.

The purpose of the new brand of non-IVV/AVA Community Events is to allow clubs more flexibility to create events that are not restricted by IVV guidelines are hopefully more responsive to local community needs. The projected start date for these events is January 2018. More detailed information will follow in the upcoming issues of the Checkpoint and can also be found in the August NEC meeting minutes. In the words of President Bonewitz, “let's not follow the Kodaks and Blockbusters of this world, but adapt and change. With this, AVA: America's Walking Club will be thriving for another 40 years and beyond.”